# CHAPTER 1

## THE PEOPLE AND THEIR VILLAGE

000 WINTER had begun. The first snow of the year had fallen. It covered the muddy streets of the village, softening the nakedness of the fruit trees which stood lonely in the bare yards. The wind from Mount Vitosha came whistling down the empty lanes, sending both man and beast to seek protection and warmth. The animals huddled in their thatched folds and shelters; the women and children crowded on the little stools near the fireplace at home. The fall sowing of wheat was in. The fields, wind-swept and snow-laden, were deserted, seemingly forgotten by the men and women who had spent so much time with them during the past months.

512 231 One ordinary day followed another. Every morning the water buffalo had to be groomed until they shone; the oxen had to be cleaned after the night in the dirty stall; these, as well as the sheep, had to be fed. Usually the animals received their meager rations before ten [291] o'clock. Shortly thereafter the men, wearing their dirty-gray sheepskin coats, their brimless lambskin hats, and their pigskin sandals, congregated at the taverns to relieve the monotony of their daily routine. At noon they plodded home to a lunch of beans, looked after the cattle once more, and gave commands to their womenfolk. The rest of the day was spent at the taverns in drinking and talking, interspersed with long, easy silences. After the evening meal, the cattle were fed again. Then the men dropped off to sleep along with the rest of the household.

181 829 The winds and enforced idleness of winter were not alone responsible for the apparent sluggishness on every hand. Slow motion was characteristic of Dragalevtsy life in general, but especially of the bodily movements of the people. *Ima vreme* (there's ~~plenty~~ of time) was either a practical philosophical tenet which explained their lack of hurry or else it was an expression frequently used to rationalize their casual manner. I never saw a peasant with a watch.

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1



who flatly decreed that his daughter could marry no one but a priest. 159
(Not only are priests well provided for financially, but they can marry 793
only once. This means that they supposedly take exceptionally good 521
care of their mates.) Sava had already completed the commercial gymnasium, had studied for two years in a school for leaders of co-operatives, and planned to attend the university. In order to comply with the demands of his sweetheart's father, however, he interrupted his educational plans long enough to prepare himself for the ecclesiastical examinations, which he passed with credit. He was then assigned to the Dragalevtsy parish. Meanwhile he had married the young lady of his choice. Soon thereafter he obtained leave of absence from his church responsibility in order to complete his work in Finance at the Svoboden (Private) University in Sofia. He was highly respected by the people whom he shepherded and was vitally interested in their welfare.

There were often two or three kibitzers while the intelligentsia 557
played cards. These were lesser officials interested in advancement, or well-to-do peasants who wanted to hobnob with the controlling group. None of these hangers-on had been westernized to the point [291] ●
of wearing a tie, and some of them still wore the heelless, pointed pigskin sandals.

Oddly enough for a Bulgarian village, the veterinarian and 759
physician were both women, who constantly found the patriarchal 562
traditions stumbling blocks to the winning of village support. The medical doctor was a Russian who had spent part of her childhood in San Francisco, but returned to the University of Petrograd for her medical training. After the Revolution she left Russia with her family.

The only other "educated" people in the village were the 875
teachers, eight in number, selected for their posts by outside school authorities rather than by the villagers themselves. Four of the eight had been born outside the pre-Hitler boundaries of Bulgaria, in territories which irredentist Bulgarians sought to recover permanently. Maria, for example, was from Dobruja, which was then a part of Rumania; Anna and Georgi were born in parts of Macedonia which

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1



which always seemed picturesque to me, a foreigner. It was Zdravka who told me how the women made their garments.

"Women's clothing is made chiefly by hand and of homemade cloth. In the homes we have very few sewing machines, which only the young girls know how to run. Most of the outer garments for men are made by the village tailor. All of us can do the traditional embroidery patterns which make our dresses so pretty, but we do not have as much embroidery now as formerly; the old women cannot see to do it and the young people want modern things."

Then Yurdan told what clothing the peasants bought:

"The women buy *zabradki* [pieces of cloth for the head]; every once in a while they also buy some flannel or silken goods, and shoes. The old women wear *kozhusi* [sheepskin coats], for which they provide the hides or buy them ready-made. Men also have to buy these *kozhusi* in addition to headwear called *kalpatsi* [pointed brimless caps], or cheap cloth caps. Many men buy ready-made suits, especially if they are unmarried, for use on holidays. Even they, when working in the fields, go back to the more durable homemade garments which do not tear so easily. They also buy some shirts and sweaters, or *shubi* [short overcoats with fur inside], and shoes. In general the tendency of the younger people is toward city dress."

I asked them why everybody dressed so much alike. Both of them chuckled and told me about the time the daughter-in-law from the wealthiest peasant household, who had spent some time in Sofia, tried to appear in a distinctive style at a Sunday promenade, only to find that the next Sunday many other girls were wearing the same innovation. Zdravka concluded from this incident:

"No, there is not much individuality in dress, for whenever someone gets something new the others copy it. Especially the young unmarried girls try to buy or to make something new so as to attract attention. But all the rest, as soon as they see it, won't take time to eat until they have made the same thing so that the one possessing it will not feel that she is in a higher position than others. It is this which makes the richer girls most angry."

This led to a discussion of how changes of style had come to the village. This is what Yurdan said:

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1



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"Since the World War there has been much change. Men stopped wearing their narrow white trousers which belted below the hips because they saw during the war that pants that belted above the hips were better. The women changed to lighter clothes because a woman from Vladaya [another village] came with others to visit here, married a Dragalevtsy man, and settled here. Other women saw that the clothes she wore were more convenient and began to adopt the new style."

The tailor's customers brought their own cloth. Five or six of the more fashion-minded young women brought dresses from other villages to be copied. A girl before marriage accumulated about twenty black *sukmani* (jumper dresses), all of the same pattern. She wore out about three of these a year. The men had one black and one rough everyday suit.

Much of the cloth was dyed at home by the peasants with the use of commercial dyes. Black was the universal color for men except in the case of the old style white trousers. If any man deviated from this fashion, people said mockingly, "You are a gypsy," thereby reminding him that he had better act like other people or run the risk of additional social disapproval.

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Shoes in Bulgaria were definitely a sign of social rank. *Tsarvulin* or "sandal-wearer," once a common term for farmer or peasant, has been somewhat displaced by *selenin* or "villager." As a matter of fact, most men in Dragalevtsy continued to wear the pigskin sandals, whereas all self-respecting village women possessed a pair of cheap western shoes. Comically enough, they frequently walked barefoot and carried these uncomfortable badges of status. Just the same, these shoes periodically needed the services of a cobbler, who in Dragalevtsy happened to be the youngest married son of Bai Milush, a highly respected peasant proprietor. Three sons, their wives and progeny comprised part of the twenty people living in Bai Milush's patriarchal dwelling. As the land which will someday be divided up among the sons was limited, each son agreed to specialize along some particular line: the oldest was the dairyman, the middle son was the crop expert, and the youngest married son (and, incidentally, the most delicate in health) was a cobbler, whom the family agreed to send to a trade school in Sofia. Because he drove in his wooden pegs with the best of them, he was building up a profitable business in the village.

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2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EEl Bulgaria EEl

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"For fuel, people . . . used small branches brought from the village forest up on the mountainside." *See page 23.*

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". . . we use a great deal of bread, which is baked by the women . . . in the ovens standing in the yards. . . ." *See page 26.*

[Facing p. 32]

11: Logio S-4 (no date) 1936 EEl Bulgaria EEl

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THE RISING GENERATION

[Facing p. 81]

li: Logio 5-4 (no date) 1936 EEl Bulgaria EEl

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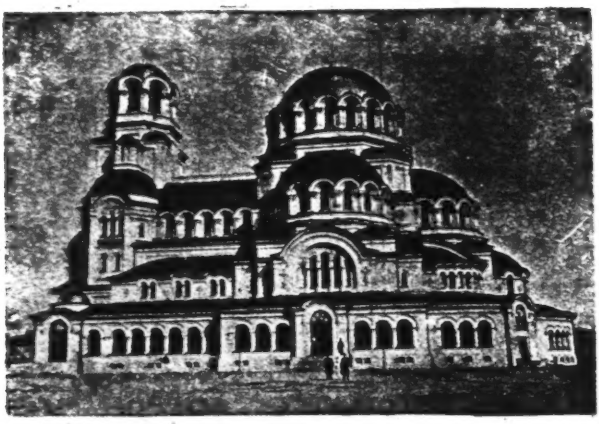

SOFIA: THE ALEX. NEVSKI CHURCH

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A GROUP OF PEASANTS

[facing p. 97]

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"The mayor [with his family] was the spearhead in the attack on the old ways." *See page 163.*

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"Trayko Danev . . . one of the richest peasants in the village." *See page 164.*

[Facing p 161]

Ill: Logio S-4 (no date) 1936 EEl Bulgaria EEl

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A PEASANT GIRL PICKING ROSES

[Facing p. 161]

Il: Logio S-4 (no date) 1936 EEl Bulgaria EEl

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A GROUP OF PEASANT WOMEN

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From left to right: D-r T. Yankov, M. Ilia Gheorgov, and the author

[facing p. 257]

342 and the stables; in the mountains there are usually structures with many stories. Formerly the windows used to have wooden sashes that ran along a groove and that one could slide to the side, in place of window 262 panes. The style of life is simple; in the country the herders were often contented with sour milk, and the farmers with maize and millet beer. 231 The raising of livestock specializes in cattle, sheep, and goats, and [221] takes place in the form of a migratory herding system, which commutes back and forth between the mountains in the summer and the plains 241 in the winter. The agriculture produces wheat, maize, barley, and rye, and in the temperate, nay, even hot, South, it cultivates rice, cotton, and sesame; from here, too, come the olive trees, the citrous 412 trees, and the chestnut trees. The hand mill is mostly used only for salt, other kinds of primitive tools have scarcely been preserved. The threshing sled (Figure 9)* came from the Orient; it is made of hard planks that have been bent upward at the front and into which sharp-edged fire-stones have been forced. When it is in use it is weighted down enough by the stones and by the weight of the leader to be able to press out the ears of grain. The rattle board (Figure 15)* has its counterparts all over ancient Europe. The sawing frame of the wandering wood cutters is an original invention. It includes a box filled with stones which is fastened by two rods and revolves around a horizontal axis, so that by its weight it supports the backward movement of the 291 saw. Through the universal joy in colors and in ornaments the national dress displays a great deal of variety. The basic elements of the men's clothing are a long, rough shirt with a wide cut which is embroidered with colored wool along the chest opening and along the shoulder; cloth or leather trousers, pleated in the Turkish manner in the east, in the west evenly tight-fitting, with a long woollen waistband; and legging-like calf cloths, as well as sandals; a sleeveless jacket or coat-like upper garment with wool trimmings and laces; a sheep's fur or hooded mantle; a dark and low lambskin cap. The women wear blouses with embroidered and crocheted ornamentation, skirts with belts, firmly woven, embroidered apron skirts, sleeveless vests or sleeve jackets, kerchiefs, headdresses and garlands around their fore-302 heads with fringe bands covered with coins and hanging far down. The 301 girls wear their hair in from 20 to 30 tresses which are held together just below shoulder level by means of chains or buckles with silver coins and pearls, and which, at the end, are gathered together into one single tress (Figure 1). They also have costly ornaments of little gold and silver plates, as well as of filigree work for which the threads were formerly often taken from ancient coins.

*[See 1: Karutz, E1 Europe, Cat. 116, p. 59a --- Analyst]

11: Start E-4 (no date) 1939 EF1 Yugoslavia EF1
Albania EG1
Serbs EF6
Bulgaria EE1
Contemporary Macedonians EE1



A Y

Other alien materials are small pieces of dyed cloth, silk ribbons, silver and gold braids and manufactured lace, often used on the sleeve edges of shirts. These materials were bought in the village shops and markets, and appear to be largely of Austrian and Italian origin; under Turkish rule they were sold in the villages by pedlars. 286 291 294

A Y

In the South and Albania, where Turkish influence is greater, there is a tendency, especially amongst the women of the towns, to wear garments made from more sumptuous materials so that, in addition to the hand-woven linens, extremely fine muslins of native make are used for shirts and aprons, and silken materials of beautiful quality for girdles, sleeves and the Moslem type of women's trousers. Fine woollen cloth from Austria and Italy is also imported for the making of jeleks, giubbas and japangi, and some of the nets used for the large embroidered veils worn by many women, both Catholic and Moslem, are of foreign origin. 291 439

**Materials used for Embroidery and other Decorative Purposes.**

These also fall into two classes, home-made and purchased.

M S

The fine wools, used largely in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Macedonia, for the decorative embroidery of oshvitza, sleeves, woollen coats, aprons and the making of fringes are spun and dyed by the women themselves. Dark brown and black goat's hair is also used in the apron fringes. "Goat's hair was extensively used in the Balkans for weaving market bags, saddle-bags and floor mats in stripes. The goats, clipped in uneven ridges, looked very ridiculous." (M.E.D.). 291 294 531

Ribbons, gold and silver braid and strips of coloured cloth were purchased and used as applique on skirts, head dresses, aprons and caps. In older and finer examples of embroidery, silk was used, and was locally produced and dyed.

B A

In Albania and the south silk is the usual medium for embroidery, which decorates shirts, muslin aprons and japangi, although on some head scarves from Zadrima and the Bulgarian woman's costume from Monastir, which are decorated in the well known Turkey red, the material used is cotton or very tightly twisted wool almost like a fine cord. Both silk, woollen and cotton threads are of home production. Amongst the photographs given by Miss Durham is one of a Moslem man spinning silk on a roadside on the outskirts of Scutari (Skodar). Gold thread is much used, and strips of beaten silver and brass are worked into the headings of braids. 291 531

A

Braiding and cording are amongst the other important forms of decoration, narrow braids and ends of wool, silk and gold thread being hand plaited and twisted. Coats of the sleeveless type, both for men and women, the short jelek, the three-quarter length giubba, and the men's full trousers (Plate V. "f") are often decorated with cords and braids sewn down in beautiful curved designs. The "elaborate embroideries on the japangi and the handsome braided designs are usually the work of men Albanian tailors". (M.E.D.). 291 531 294 463

A Y

Until in recent years foreign dyes, imported in small packets, were sold in the shops the women themselves dyed their materials. Most of the examples in this collection have been so coloured with vegetable dyes; black being obtained from ash bark (*Fraxinus excelsia*); green from flowering rush with the addition of copper sulphate which was got from the shops; yellow from sumach (*Rhus cotinus*); red 294 386

11: Start E-4 (no date) 1939 EF1 Yugoslavia EF1
Albania EG1
Bulgaria EE1



## SECTION II.

### CHAPTER VIII.

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### Albania and Southern Yugoslavia. The Costumes worn by Men and Women.

After experiencing nearly five hundred years of Turkish rule it is not surprising to find that much of the costume in Albania and in southern Yugoslavia, which as far north as Pljevlja and Priboj was part of Turkey in Europe until 1913, if not actually Turkish in character shows very strong Turkish influence.

There is also much greater variety in the garments worn by the hill tribes and the peasants and the townsfolk, therefore in the description of those in the collection it has been found advisable to group specimens on some of the Plates so as to give an indication of a complete costume such, for example, as that of the Bulgarian woman from Monastir (Bitolj) (Plate IX), the Catholic woman from Scutari (Plate V) and the essential parts of a woman's dress from Zadrima (Plate X).

Franz, Baron Nopcsa says that as early as 1912 international European dress had begun to be adopted, more particularly by the men, the young Catholics of Scutari deprecating the older styles, and wearing a combination of European garments with the older head-dress, the fez, and shoes. The younger women also have to some extent discarded the wide trousered skirt and the veil; therefore as all the specimens in this collection belong to the period previous to 1914 they represent native dress when it had its own individuality and, as such, will become increasingly valuable as records.

The following short lists of garments worn by women and men in some of the different districts have been compiled from the collection, and from the works of Baron Nopcsa* and Max Tilke†.

A Catholic woman from Scutari would wear:

(a) A shirt ("kmis") with sleeves, sometimes gathered at the wrist, either short in the body or of three-quarter length.

(b) A full-trousered skirt, often of striped silk, similar to the Moslem example on Plate VIe or "enormous baggy trousers formed of a very wide and much gathered skirt of imported, glazed, purple-black calico, the lower edge of which was sewn together leaving a hole at each corner for the feet. This was not really a trouser, as the legs were not divided, and was very cumbrous" (M.E.D.).

(c) Some form of girdle, either striped silk or a long strip of material with embroidered ends (Plate XVIf).

(d) A sleeveless coat ("giubba") with full skirt reaching to the knees (Plate XIII).

(e) A square of dark or light cloth as a head-dress, or a large net or gauze, embroidered veil, the latter being worn by married women only.

* Franz, Baron Nopcsa: "Albanien, Bauten und Geräte." Berlin, 1935.
† Max Tilke: "The Costume of Eastern Europe." London, 1926.

[Text continues on p. 36]

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs
Bulgaria EE1
Contemporary Macedonians EF8

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Fire making in Bulgaria and Macedonia
(From drawings by V. Titelbach)

[Facing page 144]